

CONFIDENTIAL

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DEC 23 1952

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The Honorable Dean Acheson  
The Secretary of State  
Department of State  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

It has recently come to my attention that Attaches of the Soviet Legation have been extended opportunities to visit American technical conferences and thereby to obtain, with a minimum of difficulty, important defense information. Though this information may be nominally unclassified, I am disturbed at our facilitating our enemies' work in gathering it.

Specifically, Engineer Major Leonid E. Pivnev, Assistant Air Attache, and Engineer Commodore Peter A. Favorov, Assistant Naval Attache, attached to the Russian Embassy, Washington, D.C., attended the National Electronics Conference in Chicago, Illinois, 29 September to 1 October 1952. During the course of this conference these officers, whose identity was not disclosed other than their names, were observed by one of my officers closely inspecting exhibits of the latest electronics equipment and pointedly questioning those in charge of the display. One asked, "What is the real purpose of this new electronic computer?" to which the exhibitor's agent replied, "This is one of the main components of our new guided missiles."

I am informed that neither the Services nor your Department exercises real restraint over proposed travel of such Attaches and that provided notice of proposed travel is received 48 hours before departure, no inquiry is made as to the purpose thereof and no hindrance is imposed.

It is my understanding that one of the purposes underlying the Department's rule controlling the travel of Soviet diplomatic personnel beyond a radius of 50 miles from Washington was to restrict their opportunities to gather economic and technical information. The foregoing incident indicates that this purpose is not being achieved. Considering the limitations and harassment to which our diplomatic personnel are subjected in the Soviet Union, it would seem to me highly desirable that the announced limits on the travel of Soviet personnel in this country be rigidly enforced.

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In view of the fact that even strict enforcement of the 50-mile travel radius would not prevent attendance at technical conferences or similar meetings in the Baltimore and Washington areas, it would further seem desirable to urge those conducting scientific and technical meetings to classify them "Restricted" to the end that at least representatives of powers hostile to us would be excluded.

I would appreciate your reactions to these thoughts at your earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

Walter B. Smith  
Director

O/DD/I:RAJr.:avl (16 Dec.52)

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Approved For Release 2003/07/29 : CIA-RDP80R01731R001300280020-1

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SMITH

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The unrestrained movement of Soviet Attachés at U.S. economic and technical conferences was discussed at the Deputies' meeting, December 15. You asked me to prepare the attached letter for your signature.

+3  
for: RA Jr.

*Para. 3 may be a little strong  
but among says the information  
is accurate*

*gr*

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17 December 1952

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